

# Workforce 21 to reshape hiring tactics

To maintain a technically skilled and diverse workforce, Western and other DOE agencies are focusing their hiring strategies on the Department's new "Workforce for the 21st Century Initiative."

Workforce 21 was designed to ensure that agencies hire and retain employees with technical expertise and skills critical to national security, energy resources, environmental management and science and technology. This new initiative marks the completion of DOE's Strategic Alignment Initiative, which reduced staffing levels by 24 percent, or more than 3,300 employees, since May 1995. Because these staffing levels decreased beyond the 1993 reinventing government goals and because missions have changed, Secretary Bill Richardson has identified areas where hiring is critical.

"Workforce 21 will help us address concerns raised by the Department's oversight agencies, Congress and internal audits, which have identified shortages of skilled technical staff as a contributing factor in management (issues) and cost overruns," said Richardson.

The initiative was also crafted to ensure that women and minorities are better represented at the senior and executive levels and in the workplace as a whole.

"I am convinced that America can only stay competitive in the 21st Century if we tap the talents of our nation's diverse population," said Richardson in a memo to Western and other DOE agencies. "In recent years, the lack of outside hiring opportunities has limited our ability to make meaningful changes to our workforce profile." He said this is especially important since

the Department competes with private industry for skilled workers.

In January, the Department asked all agencies to submit individual Workforce 21 plans. Plans had to address streamlining and restructuring actions and strategies for reshaping the workforce to meet mission requirements within available funding. The plans had to identify critical hiring needs, strategies for acquiring and developing a highly skilled and diverse workforce and use of buyout and early retirement authorities to support changing workforce requirements.

Western's Economic Impact and Diversity Office and Human Resources offices have developed initiatives to implement our plan. These initiatives address such issues as training supervisors in their EEO responsibilities; tracking, coordinating and improving recruitment efforts; developing EEO evaluation factors; and improving the diversity of applicants. Baseline data of hiring efforts is now being collected and EEO staff are also revising the Applicant Disability/National Origin and Sex Identification form to determine how applicants found out about vacancies.

"We need to continue to focus on outreach efforts and career planning and development to assure each employee's success," said **Chuck Marquez**, an equal employment manager in Golden.

Information from this form will provide valuable feedback on recruiting efforts. DOE will also report on best practices. ■

## CSO, regions get to work on Workforce 21

Some of the specific strategies Western offices are using to achieve Workforce 21 goals include:

### Administrator's Office:

Target recruiting to encourage widest array of applicants; seek candidates for positions from colleges that practice active diversity recruitment; consider using upward mobility, Outstanding Scholar hiring authority and student employment programs.

### CAO:

Recruit at schools for minorities and women; create a new computer specialist student trainee position; convert two Welfare-to-Work employees into vacant permanent positions.

### CPO:

Host two intern positions through the Council of Energy Resource Tribes; continue training and career advancement development assignments; fill a vacant civil engineering position with a student trainee and recruit three student engineers to fill anticipated future vacancies.

### CFO:

Notify minority and women's professional organizations of all vacancy announcements for accounting positions; support existing minority student employees in reaching career goals.

### UGP:

Establish apprentice positions; recruit a student to fill a power marketing position; and expand recruitment area.

### DSW:

Advertise vacancies in local minority newspapers, trade magazines and at local community colleges; recruit at local alternative high schools; establish rotational development program and fill from colleges with many minorities or women.

### RMR:

Mail all vacancies to organizations with many minorities and women; use the Student Career Experience Program; when appropriate, fill positions with multiple grade levels, students or through upward mobility; establish two dispatcher trainee positions.

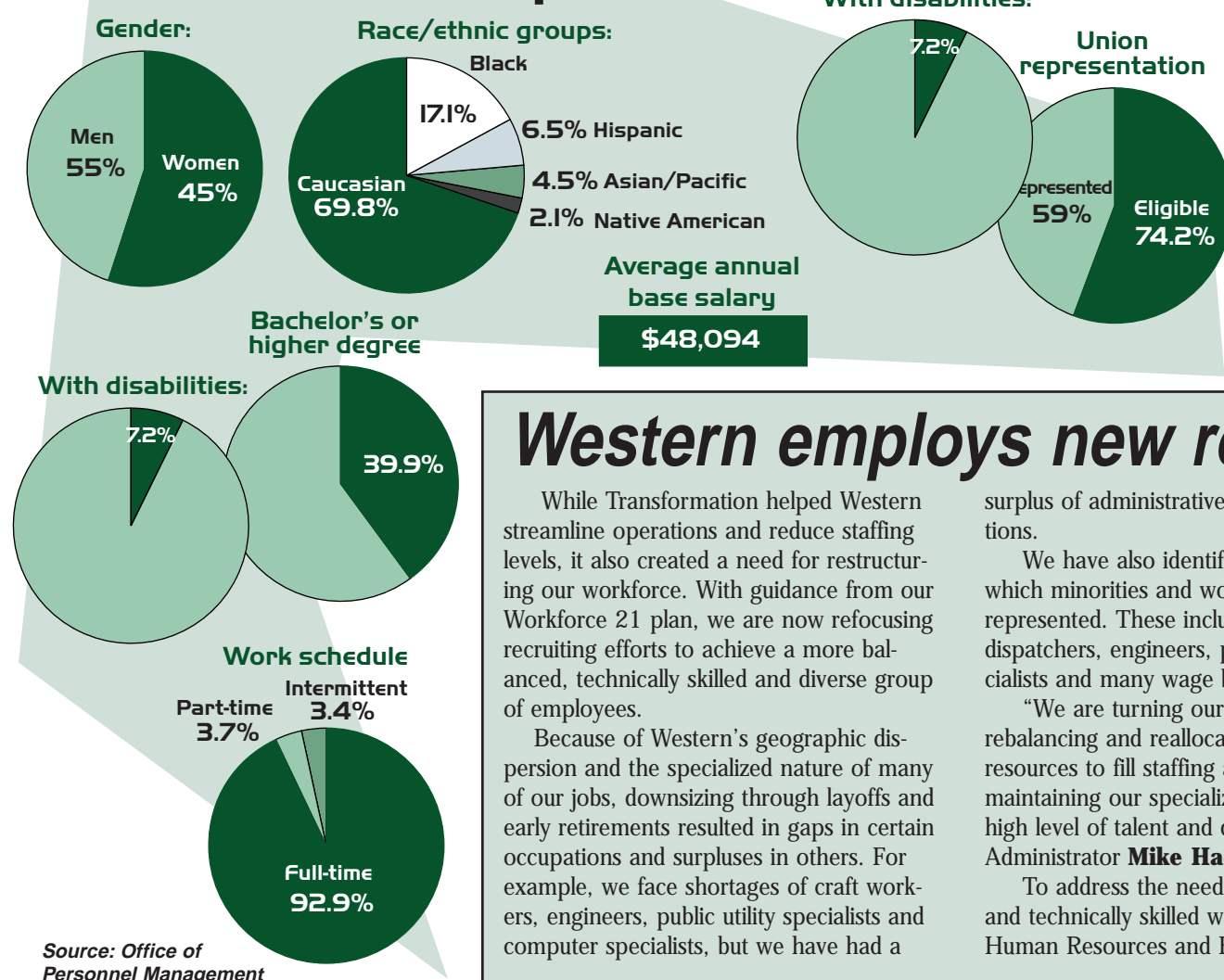
### SNR:

Post vacancy announcements electronically, such as the USA Jobs web site or regional home page; develop a diversity mailing list; open all vacancies three to four weeks; use paid and Internet advertising for appropriate positions.

### CRSP:

Continue to use student program; restructure positions to allow entry-level candidates to compete; provide cross-training and other growth opportunities for employees.

## Federal workforce profile



## Western employs new recruiting strategies to restructure workforce

While Transformation helped Western streamline operations and reduce staffing levels, it also created a need for restructuring our workforce. With guidance from our Workforce 21 plan, we are now refocusing recruiting efforts to achieve a more balanced, technically skilled and diverse group of employees.

Because of Western's geographic dispersion and the specialized nature of many of our jobs, downsizing through layoffs and early retirements resulted in gaps in certain occupations and surpluses in others. For example, we face shortages of craft workers, engineers, public utility specialists and computer specialists, but we have had a

surplus of administrative and financial positions.

We have also identified positions in which minorities and women are under-represented. These include power system dispatchers, engineers, public utilities specialists and many wage board positions.

"We are turning our attention toward rebalancing and reallocating human resources to fill staffing and skills gaps and maintaining our specialized workforce at a high level of talent and diversity," said Administrator **Mike Hacskeylo**.

To address the need for a more diverse and technically skilled workforce, Western Human Resources and EEO staff are now

expanding areas of recruitment. Efforts focus on using special hiring authorities and recruitment methods to fill advertised vacancies with the best qualified people.

"These efforts come at a time when Western needs to fill a variety of critical positions across the organization and provide new tools to contact potential applicants outside of our more traditional recruitment sources," said Chief Administrative Officer **Vicki Ponce**. "This just makes good business sense since we are competing in a tight labor market with the rest of the utility industry," she added.

Western's recruitment strategies include:

- ✓ Reaching a broader audience by advertising vacancies on Western's web sites.
  - ✓ Eliminating any delays in hiring so that Western is competitive to quality applicants in demand;
  - ✓ Re-establishing contacts at community-based organizations and with diversity and recruitment coordinators from minority-serving institutions;
  - ✓ Recruiting from trade schools with a high percentage of minorities and women enrolled in programs closely related to critical functions within Western, such as the crafts;
  - ✓ Using existing career development programs, such as training and on-the-job experience, to enhance upward mobility of employees;
  - ✓ Supporting the Administration and Department's Welfare-to-Work program.
- To address surplus positions and our challenge of reducing 25 percent of our administrative overhead expenses, we asked for early retirement authority through Dec. 31, 1999, as well as buyout authority through the Department's Strategic Buyout Plan. We have not yet received approval.